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By Gabriel Max, the dramatic Munich artist, there is "The Last Token," a life-size figure of a Christian girl going to martyrdom in the Coliseum. As the hapless creature staggers among the wild beasts who are to tear her to pieces, and supports her failing form with one hand against the wall, a fresh rose falls at her feet; it is "the last token," the final symbol of earthly love coming at the supreme moment to distract her thoughts from her heavenly journey. The eager upward glance of her eye, as she seeks her lover among the spectators, will quickly be changed for the absorbed and collected rapture of the martyr, when Rome proceeds to work her will, and make of this tender unknown maiden one of the saints of the faith.

The specimen of Decamps is perhaps the gem of the collection, and is one of the two or three finest works owned in America of that master. It represents "The Night-Watch at Smyrna" going its rounds. A twilight veil is beginning to fall on the plastered walls of the Eastern city, whose rich limpidity of light is attained with that ease and largeness of style peculiar to the artist; and among these brilliant latticed houses the Oriental throng makes way for the mounted police as it shoots through the streets on horseback, the leader riding proudly first in his glittering Arnault costume, and the rest sweeping on in his wake. The consummate horsemanship with which the gendarmes sit their steeds, the breezy sense of motion in the troop, the general scheme of rich and suave color, make this one of the most satisfying and harmonious pieces of Orientalism in the range of art.

A small picture by Hamon shows two of his graceful, helpless-looking, brainless girls, as soft and defenceless as blossoms, buying vases at a Greek potter's booth. The seller leans over his counter, quite in the style of the Grand Magasin du Louvre or Petit St. Thomas. It was Hamon's incessant and successful joke to wrap modern French manners and ways in classic costumes, just to show how natural they would look, and how unchanging are human whimsies through the ages. By Hébert, an artist who is a great stranger in America, is seen a young face of a beautiful youthful type, the head and shoulders bare, the profile turned to the right; the Oriental darkness of the complexion is the chief point to notice, and reminds the visitor of the sun-burned gods of the Pompeii frescoes. This is not literally the only specimen owned by our fellow-countrymen of the painter of those gems of the Luxembourg, the "Malaria" and the "Cervarolles;" we recall Mr. Belmont's "Savoyard with Puppets," and the color-study for the "Cervarolles" in a Boston parlor; but the rarity of the melancholy painter's work in our sunny country makes this small specimen additionally precious. By Van Marcke, the eminent pupil of Troyon, there is a fine "Landscape and Cattle," about five feet by seven, showing to a particular degree the transmitted influence of Constable, that master who was really the artistic parent of Troyon.

"The Pawnbroker's Shop" was recently described in this magazine, on the occasion of its being lent by its owner for the Seventh Regiment Fair. It will suffice now to say that it is one of the noblest extant and most elaborate specimens of Munkácsy's earlier and certainly stronger manner. At that time the artist felt that he needed the starkest and most opaque blacks to be laid on in patches and serve as reliefs for his faces; nothing but blackness and opacity would act as the proper foil to his most vigorously-modelled figures and solid objects. In less happy instances he boldly plastered his inkiness as a background all around the figure; and this was a falsity, because nature's backgrounds are never black, but always show the Rembrandt trembling of golden notes. In Miss Wolfe's example he has modified his trick with exquisite tact; his patches of black are there, because he needs them; you can pick out three or four conspicuous ones at symmetrical distances across the picture; but they are the robes and dresses and velvet-ens of foreground figures; foreground figures need not look atmospheric, if the aerial perspective of the rest is good; and thus the artist secures that trick of emphasis which belongs to his special rhetoric, without violating probabilities. As for the dramatic interest of the throng at the pawnbroker's, it is the whole gamut of society, studied with the versatility and acumen of a Hogarth.

Lefebvre's "Fisher-Girl" was also lent for the Seventh Regiment Fair; it is a life-size full-length of a Greek fisherman's daughter sitting on a rock by the sea, the net she has been weaving lying by her hand as she turns

her classic profile away from the spectator. Of course, as a study by the most exquisite modern draughtsman of the female form, the "Maiden" has a certain statuesque importance. But the play of light and color on the form does not belong to the landscape; it is a studied figure around which a bit of conventional scenery has been painted in; anybody can see that the relief of the model against a whitish sky has been obtained by hanging a sheet behind the original.

The specimen of Gérôme, though not of a popular nature, is really one of the best that can be found. It is the interior of the "Mosque of Amrou," at Cairo, a bit of mediævalism even for Moslem architecture, having been constructed in the first century of the hegira, at once one of the most interesting monuments of Cairo, and one of the earliest witnesses of the conquest of Islamism. In this interior, with its look of antiquity and bareness, its mighty intersections of wooden braces and pillars, like nothing else that Eastern architecture furnishes, is seen one of those crowds that only Gérôme can paint—photographic, ethnological, actual. There are multitudes of figures, standing in adoration. A corpulent Turk at the right is uncommonly well planted on his feet, a thing that most modern painters, and many of the famous old ones, neglect wilfully. An interesting figure is a slender penitent, or begging monk, naked among the richly-clothed worshippers, and crowned with a forest of crispy black hair, which he has allowed to grow, against Moslem custom, in accordance with some fanatic vow. This Gérôme is an intense concentration of a great many smaller Gérômes—an armload of miniatures.

By Bonnat there is a pitifully inferior example, a life-size Contadina girl of twelve, drinking at a Roman fountain. It is without vigor or character. Bonnat has this occasional alacrity at sinking into bathos. By Merle there is a conventionally beautiful life-size Bretonne girl, clasping her hands on her breast; by Merle also there is a life-size embodiment of Spring—a graceful maiden straying through a wood, clothed only in a floating chiton of dark striped gauze, like streaming vapor, as she steals through the blossoming trees.

The "Day-dream" of Couture is a far stronger thing, and is one of the finest productions of his capricious pencil. It is a life-size figure of a schoolboy of ten, throwing aside his books to blow soap-bubbles on the school desk. It is a lovely, whimsical, infinitely tender motive, painted with the last degree of delicacy, sensitiveness and vigor. This production is possibly the poem of Couture's life. It was done to the order of Mr. John Wolfe, a cousin of the present owner, whose fine gallery may challenge our attention soon.

The remaining Knaus we should have mentioned along with his "Holy Family," but for the utterly incongruous difference of subject. It is a diamond of the first water, and represents all that Knaus can do in his most individual line. An old woman, sitting in a dingy cellar, and perhaps disappointed of human affection in some early love tragedy, has given up her existence to the cultivation of cats. They swarm over her. A nearly white cat sleeps tyrannically in her lap, preventing her from stirring; a kitten is perched on her shoulder; in front are half a dozen kits playing around a dark sitting tabby; one of the little soft morsels flies quite through the air toward another extended on its back with its paws all abroad; and another little kitten leans up against the old cat so much as to be out of all balance, like an image of a kit that has been reared against a wall to dry. The mysteries of cat character are solved in this picture until there is nothing more left worth discovering. Knaus has found the philosopher's stone of catkind.

A grand specimen of Jules Breton represents a "Pardon" or church-festival of Brittany, showing a throng that whitens the whole churchyard and hillside with its starched coifs. In the midst the long-haired peasantmen, types of the primitive apostles, reverently bear the host in its sacred procession around the exterior of the chapel. Painted with full sympathy and religious feeling, and important from its populous assemblage of types, this superb Breton deserves to rank with his "Benediction of the Harvests" in the Luxembourg.

By Riefstahl there is a marriage procession in a mountainous country. A water-color of Fortuny's, less important than some, shows the "Camel Driver's Repose." Camels are lying down and stretching their flexible noses along the ground, a donkey lying near turns its head to the left, and the driver rests among his brutes, brutal as they. Another water-color, by Bida,

may be rather called a drawing, heightened with a few tints; it is a large and delicately drawn scene of the destruction of the Mamelukes. A courtyard is crowded with figures, a gateway in the middle distance is thronged with the soldiery; and death, pain, and despair in all their forms writhe and interlace in front. Water-colors by Simonetti and other capable painters decorate the up-stairs rooms.

By Vibert, in oil-color, is his amusing scene of a priest at a garden table whose hospitality he is all the while testing, admonishing a Spanish maja for her light behavior at the instance of the mother, who watches the effect. By Hector Leroux is seen a classical subject, two Roman ladies visiting the interior of a tomb. By Troyon there is a landscape with cattle. By Dupré and De Cock there are valuable and characteristic landscapes, as well as a pair by Marechal in the hall.

The cabinets of curiosities are a collection that would reward a separate visit. We will mention but a few. The large faience plaques from the late Exposition, with gilding under the glaze, merit special attention. That showing the profile of a mediæval Swiss girl in a plumed hat, is by R. Collin; the other exhibits a classical subject. The fine aiguère of modern Limoges enamel, with illustrations from Tasso's "Jerusalem," was painted by Soyer. One of the parlors contains a good modern statue in marble of a girl at a fountain. The life-size nearly nude Nubian lamp-bearers in bronze which decorate the hall, were modelled by Toussaint, and only one other pair of the same size (now in Europe) was ever cast.

CICERONE.

#### THOUGHTS ABOUT ART.

THE progress of modern civilization has produced some notable and not altogether desirable effects in the domain of art. Concerning these a recent English writer in *The Contemporary Review* makes some instructive observations. The Hindoo, says this author, arranges colors for a fabric with the same certainty of intuition that a bird weaves his nest, or a spider its web. His blues and greens are as harmonious in their combinations as those of Nature herself; while the "educated" Englishman is now introducing every species of atrocity in form and color wherever he goes, ruining the beautiful native manufactures by instructions from his superior "standpoint," forcing the workers to commit every blunder which he does himself at home, in order to adapt their fabrics to the abominable taste of the middle classes in England. Even the missionaries, male and female, cannot hold their hands, and teach the children in schools and harems crochet and cross-stitch of the worst designs and colors, instead of the exquisite native embroidery of the past. Arsenic greens, magenta, and gas-tar dyes, are introduced by order of the merchants into carpets and cashmere shawls; vile colors and forms in pottery and bad lacquer-work are growing up, by command, in China and Japan. There seems to be no check or stay to the irruption of bad taste which is swamping the whole world. The Japanese have even been recommended to make a museum of their own beautiful old productions quickly, or the very memory of their existence, and of the manner in which they were made, would be lost.

It is commonly supposed that the taste of the French is better than the English, and the pretty, the bizarre, the becoming, may indeed be said to belong to their domain; but high art is not their vocation. A certain harmony is obtained by quenching color, as in the "sourir étouffé," the "Bismarck malade," the "rose dégradée," the "celadon" of the Sèvres china, all eighth and tenth degrees of dilution; but pure color like that of Persia and of the East generally they never now dare to dip their hands into. The gorgeous effects of their own old painted glass, the "rose windows" of the churches at Rouen and in many other towns of Normandy, are far beyond their present reach.

The stained glass of all countries in Europe, indeed, belonging to the good times, is a feast of color which none of the modern work can approach. There is a "Last Judgment," said to be from designs by Albert Dürer, which was taken in a sea-fight on its road to Spain, and put up in a little church at Fairford, in Gloucestershire, which dazzles us with its splendor; and the scraps which are still to be found all over England in village churches (many of which are now believed to be of home manufacture) are as beautiful as the great Flemish windows thirty feet high.